The CAMP on POCONNUCK

A STORY OF THE CONNECTICUT BORDER

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The Camp on Poconnuck

Edward O. Dyer

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TO JOHN WHEELER HARDING

MY COMPANION IN CAMP AND ON THE TRAIL

THIS LITTLE STORY IS DEDICATED

"By St. Nicholas,
I have a sudden passion for the wild wood —
We should be free as air in the wild wood —
What say you? Shall we go? Your hands, your hands!"
— *Robin Hood.*

"And they shall dwell safely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods." — *Ezekiel.*

THE CAMP ON POCONNUCK.

(Founded on Fact.)

"Harry, your cap is running off. See! it is going into the woods," said George Everett as the two boys lay stretched out on a bed of boughs before their campfire on Indian Mountain. Sure enough the cap was in motion. It would stop a few seconds, then start and move rapidly forward as though some bogie of the night was in it. The boys were frightened at this phenomenon they could not explain. They were brothers, Harry was seventeen and George twenty. It was their vacation, they had just finished their terms at the high school and in the university and had been invited out into the country by their uncle who lived at "Troutbeck," a break in that wall of the Taconic Highlands which separates New York and Connecticut.

After broiling some fresh meat for supper on sharp sticks before the fire they

had lain down to rest. It was their first night in the woods and their first experience in camping out. They had been listening to the whippoorwills and were just about to fall asleep when, taking one last look around the camp, George saw his brother's cap making off. "Get it quick, Harry, or you will lose it. I don't believe you dare to touch it." A boy does not like to be thought a coward, and though he was unnerved by the strange spectacle Harry ran rapidly after his cap, pounced upon it and held it down just as it was disappearing under a huge log. There was something warm and bristly under the cap. It was no spirit or bogie of the night but a little dark animal covered on the back and tail with mottled quills, sharp as needles, which he now shot forth in rage and alarm. A young porcupine had crawled under the cap and when he tried to get out the cap stuck on his quills. The boys examined the little rodent carefully. He was not large enough to do much harm though he slapped at them angrily with his tail. The quills were partly hidden in the long thick hair and each one had a sharp barb at the end. "It's too bad to kill the little fellow,

Harry, he was camping out under your cap. What is that line in your last declamation? O, I remember it now. It is the ghost in Hamlet who says,

> 'I could a tale unfold, whose lightest word
> Would harrow up thy soul;
> Make each particular hair to stand on end,
> Like quills upon the fretful porcupine.'

He's fretful enough anyway."

The boys released the porcupine, which quickly ran off into the forest. Then they lay down again. Beyond the circle of the fire the forest was darker than ever and save for the hoot-owls across the lake the night was still. It was a strange experience for them, this loneliness and mystery of the woods. The night wind on the brow was like a mother's hand caressing fever. The fire was almost out, gleaming only in a few last embers. It was nearly midnight; they had fallen asleep at last, the long deep sleep of the woods. Suddenly a blood-curdling screech rang through the forest and a heavy animal leaped from a tree, landing with a thump that almost shook the ground, only a few feet from Harry's head. The boys sprang to their feet; they could not see anything but again

and again they heard that screech, a wailing, prolonged, agonized scream, as though a little child was being mangled. For a moment it would cease, then, in the dim dark forest, the silence of the night would be torn. The boys trembled and shook, there was no further sleep for them. Harry slipped a cartridge into his rifle and both waited and longed for the dawn. They rekindled the fire but did not venture into the black circle beyond it, though, as they looked around they noticed a piece of raw meat had disappeared which they had carelessly left.

In the morning the boys went down to see old John Gilder who lived in a shanty at the foot of the mountain. They told him their story, said the screech sounded like a panther's. "'Taint no panther but a wildcat," said John. "Them varmints comes over from *Pine Cobble*. The ledges around *Baldwin's Mill* is full on 'em." John Gilder was a character. A farmer let him live in his shanty on condition that he looked after the fences and salted his sheep. John had a peculiar creed that if you took tobacco and whisky enough a rattlesnake wouldn't "tech ye." In cold

weather he went into winter quarters like the woodchucks. Save for the smoke curling from his chimney you would never suspect that anyone lived in the shanty. He whittled out ax helves and made a few baskets for a living but was essentially an Esau, a man of the wild. The old hunter agreed to come up after breakfast with his dog and hunt the mountain over for "the varmint." The boys were in high spirits notwithstanding their loss of sleep. They felt safe with John. Old Whizzer, his foxhound, was one of the best dogs on the border of Litchfield and Dutchess counties. So they set out together. They had not hunted long, in fact, had hardly begun to climb the steep sides of *Poconnuck,* when old Whizzer broke out into a furious baying. A long-legged animal clearing ten feet at a jump went whacking down the pasture, over the bushes and through the stubble. "'Tis a jack-rabbit," said Harry. "No, 'taint," said John. "They hunt them fellers on Maount Rigy. 'Taint no jackrabbit but a Belgian hare. See him leg it. Putter, old feller. You're obliged ter have ter. Whizzer is arter ye." Just then the boys saw a cunning piece of strategy. The

hare ran through an opening in a wall and instantly reversed his course before the yelping hound saw him. Old Whizzer tore into the hayfield, going so fast he couldn't stop, and when he looked around Mr. Hare was not to be seen. It was curious to behold the dog's crestfallen look as out in the middle of the field he vainly sniffed the air. "Find him, Whizzer!" yelled John. Old Whizzer was no shepherd dog to follow only with his eyes. He came back to the opening and with his nose to the ground soon had the trail again. He now gained so rapidly that the hare ran to cover. "'Bliged ter have ter," said John. "Whizzer's holed him."

Although the boys hunted the entire mountain over that morning they could find no trace of the animal which had frightened them in the night. After dinner Uncle Dick came to camp. The boys were glad to see him, especially George. It was agreed that Harry and John Gilder should continue the hunt that day while George and Uncle Dick kept together. Of the two brothers George had the deeper nature. He was very fond of history and German. On the contrary outdoor life appealed to

Harry, who had read Paul du Chaillu and the hunting adventures of President Roosevelt with the greatest avidity. Their uncle was very glad to have the boys visit him at this time, for his wife had recently died. "Why is this mountain called *Poconnuck?*" said George, after they had walked awhile together. "Some call it *Poconnuck* and some Indian Mountain," said his uncle. "There were two Indian villages at its foot. The larger, on the western side, was *Wequadnach,* which means "extending to the mountain." *Poconnuck* is a word which has different spellings and is the name of six places in Connecticut. It means "cleared land," land from which the trees and bushes have been removed so as to fit it for cultivation. "*Poconnuck* was the corn land of the Indians." "What Indians lived here?" "Mohicans, the same tribe as those at Stockbridge to whom Jonathan Edwards preached." "What is that monument out in the field by the lake?" "That is the Moravian Monument," said his uncle. "It has a more thrilling story than the Haystack at Williamstown. The heart of Bruce is buried under it, David Bruce, one of the Moravian Brethren who died here

among his Indian converts. The Indians loved him so that they wrapped his body in white and rowed it on two canoes across the lake to their place of burial under the sighing pines. Bruce was the first Moravian to be buried among the hills and valleys of New England. The mission station was on the other side. The Brethren called the lake, *Gnadensee,* the Lake of Grace. There is no other name like it in our country. I know of none in the world. It is the speech of the Fatherland in the blue Saxon mountains beyond the sea." "What others came here?" "Baron John deWatteville, Bishop Cammerhof an alumnus of the University of Jena, and some of humbler birth. They were princely souls, all of them. Arthur and the Round Table had no such knights as these." "Was there no woman saint among them?" "Yes, the Countess Benigna." "What! a real live countess?" "Yes, The Lady of the Lake. She is no fictitious character but has been here upon its 'silver strand.' That was in 1748. She was the oldest daughter of Count Zinzendorf and heiress of the manor. The Count's family was very old, running back in Austria for twenty generations.

The Zinzendorfs stood close to the Emperor, but the Countess gave up every worldly honor that she might come to America with her father. She accompanied him on horseback on his second visit to the Indian country. I can see them now making their way through the wilderness and tangled swamps of the New World. They crossed the Hudson at Esopus and Rhinebeck. When I go there in the spring to see the fisherman seine the shad I always think of the Countess." "Uncle Dick, I have read that Zinzendorf only came as far as *Shekomeko,* so the Countess didn't come to *Gnadensee* after all." "Yes, she did, but that was later, six years later. You see she had married John deWatteville in the meantime, her father's private secretary." "I thought the Moravians got their wives by lot," said George. "So they did, my boy, but John deWatteville got his by love. He loved Benigna from the first and had every opportunity to know her. They married for love, but they married in the Lord. When they came to the Lake of Grace it was their wedding journey prolonged; they wanted to cheer and strengthen the discouraged Indian mission. Benigna's hus-

band was a bishop of the Moravian Church and his wife was a Countess." "Uncle Dick, I saw a countess at Newport last summer. She had a long German name; there were diamonds in her hair, but she didn't care much about camping out or visiting Indian missions. By the way, hadn't the Countess Benigna some younger sisters?" "Yes, Agnes and Elizabeth, too old for you, George. Splendid girls they were. Why, Count Zinzendorf's daughters sacrificed their possessions to pay their father's debts, let the old manor go to raise money for the church. They weren't fortune hunters like their modern relatives, whose trunks you see in the hotels at Palm Beach and Narragansett Pier and who have added this command to the decalogue, Thou shalt not be poor."

The afternoon wore pleasantly away. George and his uncle had come out on the ledges where there was a fine view of the lake. His uncle told him a long story of how the Moravians finding some drunken Indians in Manhattan had followed them to their forest villages in these parts and then how saintly souls like Bruce and Benigna with the authorities at Bethlehem had

established mission stations at *Shekomeko, Wequadnach,* and at *Pachgatgoch* on the Housatonic.

It was now the hour of sunset, a time for reverie and dreams. The golden glory of the dying day burnished the still surface of the water; rapidly the warm rich hues were fading from the sky. The campers looked down in silence upon the monument and the shining levels of the lake. It was the *Abenddunkel* of the Moravians. Over the dewy meadows sounded afar the village bells calling the faithful to prayer. The deep tones of the clock-tower on Sharon Street were like a monk's compline hymn. "Uncle Dick, is there any way of preserving this beautiful name, *Gnadensee?* You say there is no other like it in all the world."

"The name is not very familiar, George. The boundary line of Connecticut and New York runs through the center of the lake, but so far the people in both these states have been ignorant or indifferent about the name. It was in Moravian archives and writings that I found it. I think fellows like you and Harry who study German ought to hand on the name. *Poconnuck* and *Gnadensee* must not be

lost." "Tell me some more about the Moravians, Uncle. What were their habits and customs?"

"Well, George, that is a long story. They were a simple-hearted Christian people who in their life imitated the Apostles, having all things in common. They were very industrious and sang at their work. One of their bishops wrote hymns for the spinning sisters. In their settlements, scattered up and down the world, they observe the German custom of saluting at meals. *"Eine gesegnete Mahlzeit!"* and *"Ich wünsche wohl gespeist zu haben!"* say the host and hostess as they give you a cordial right hand. Their *Gemüthlichkeit,* or friendly good time is not sitting down in a beer-garden before schooners of lager to listen to strains from Beethoven and Wagner but a simple warm-hearted joy in the Lord over buns and coffee." "How do they court and marry?" asked George. "Formerly they used the sacred lot in deciding all important matters and even chose their wives in that way, though now they use more worldly methods."

"Not a bad idea for theologs," said Uncle Dick, with a sly wink at his nephew.

" A minister of the gospel should not marry a butterfly or wed a fashion plate but let the Lord decide it."

" But the Moravians won't fight," said George. " Theodore Roosevelt says every patriot ought to have a fighting edge."

" No, George, the Moravians were conscientiously opposed to warfare. They have been blamed for not fighting in our Revolution, but in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, within ' Colonial Hall,' now used by them as a girls' seminary, five hundred Revolutionary soldiers died. Moravian sisters have always been a kind of Red Cross annex to the army." " Did not the Nuns of Bethlehem consecrate Pulaski's Banner, as Longfellow sings?" " No George, that is entirely legendary and opposed to their tenets." " Have the Moravians no love for the Fatherland?" " Yes, but it is not a furious fighting passion. I once spent a night at Bingen on the Rhine. Across the river was the colossal bronze statue of Germania designed to keep alive the fires of patriotism by commemorating the German victories in the Franco-Prussian war. Strolling out on the promenade that evening I heard some German students singing

'The Watch on the Rhine.' It was thrilling and stirred the blood. Across the historic stream, sung by deep, strong voices, were borne the words,

> "Rest, Fatherland, for sons of thine
> Shall steadfast keep the *"Wacht am Rhine,"*

but George, I like Zinzendorf's hymn better." "What is it, Uncle?"

"'*Jesu, geh voran.*'

> 'Jesus, still lead on,
> Till our rest be won;
> And although the way be cheerless,
> We will follow, calm and fearless;
> Guide us by thy hand
> To our Fatherland.'

That sentiment is better than any martial song that was ever written. I prefer it to the Marseillaise or the Star Spangled Banner. Patriotism is a selfish thing until it receives a Christian baptism. The highest, finest patriotism is the Moravian's." Here a sudden crashing through the brush interrupted their conversation.

"Uncle Dick! Uncle Dick!" shouted Harry, "what are you and George doing out there, killing mosquitos? John Gilder and I got back to camp an hour ago. Come back

and have some supper. The fire is blazing, the coffee is boiling and I have made a great discovery. Get a move on you and come along." When they reached camp, George found that Harry had much to tell about his afternoon with John Gilder. They had hunted all over the mountain and even gone over on Mount Riga. The old hunter had there found a rare shrub. It was the rhododendron, very abundant in the southern Appalachians but extremely rare so far north as this. It was the same as that sought after by the English gentry for their country estates. " I once saw an acre of them growing around Lord Bantry's shooting-lodge," said Uncle Dick. " That was in the mountains of Ireland, near Glengariff. I had walked up with my friend one Sunday afternoon. Boys, don't tell any one that you found this rhododendron, or the city people will come and get it for their lawns." Here Harry could contain himself no longer but brought out an armful of treasures he had found in a cave on *Poconnuck*. There was the frontal bone of a stag, the jaw and teeth of some large animal, pieces of tortoise shell and specimens of broken pottery, very fragile but

showing considerable skill and a genuine love of beauty. His uncle, who had the finest collection of Indian relics in the county, with a banner-stone from the Mound Builders, said, after a careful examination, that Harry's treasures were real Indian relics and very valuable, left by the Indians who lived here at the foot of the mountain. Harry had other stories to tell. They had located a bee-tree and found a fox-burrow. John Gilder had showed him how to make barrel hoops out of hickory saplings and prepare a bean-hole for the camp.

The next morning broke bright and clear. From the top of *Poconnuck,* which they had climbed for the sunrise, the boys counted six lakes. Three states met up there, New York, Connecticut and Massachusetts, and looming on the sky-line was the long ragged range of the Catskills.

After breakfast Uncle Dick proposed that they should row across the lake, taking the very course, though in an opposite direction, which the Indian canoes had taken when they bore the body of Bruce across for burial. Landing in a cove of lilies, where the wild deer were feeding but which the law forbade them to shoot, they

moored their boat while Uncle Dick led the boys through the fields to a cemetery in an apple orchard. "Here," said he, "was the site of the old Moravian mission. Here James Powell, another of the Brethren, was buried. He wanted to find the 'Bruce-places — ' 'tis *'Bruce-platten'* in the German — and so came here later. On opposite sides of the Lake of Grace the missionaries rest, but their names are carved on the same monument, the only Moravian monument in New England. They had gone as you sing in the Christian Endeavor hymnal, 'over mountain or plain or sea.' You know the Moravian was the minute-man of the Lord's army. He was a free knight of the Lord, *'Ein freier Knecht des Herrn.'*"

"Uncle Dick, tell me more about the Countess. I prefer her to those Brethren who wouldn't fight." "Well, George, she was a great traveler. In addition to these visits into the Indian country first with her father and later with her husband, she crossed and recrossed the Atlantic many times. I will read you what I copied out of a Moravian diary; you will find it in the archives of the Brethren's Church at Beth-

lehem, Pennsylvania. It is from the original German." Here Uncle Dick produced a crumpled bit of paper and read, " They took ship at Amsterdam. A series of storms set in — they steered for the West Indies. Watteville and his wife lived for weeks on hard biscuit and beer. They at last reached the West Indies, but the vessel struck a reef off the island of Barbuda and was lost. The passengers and crew took to the boats. In descending Bishop de Watteville missed his hold and fell into the sea. He was rescued by two sailors with great difficulty. After many escapes the entire ship's company reached the land. The Governor of Barbuda took Bishop de Watteville and the Countess into his own house and showed them great kindness. They had been on ship-board one hundred and forty-four days and suffered intensely." " That voyage of the Countess makes me think of our last Sunday-school lesson when St. Paul was wrecked at Malta," George said. " Yes, her husband's official position in the Moravian Church required a continual supervision of the missions. The bishop and the Countess went together. They had all sorts of adventures, were

in perils in the wilderness and perils in the sea."

As the boat rounded a point of land Harry's quick eye detected a camp in the pines with this sign over the door, "Home for Aged Women." "There's where the Countess boarded and slept, I suppose." There was also a fac-simile in birch bark of a large bass which had been taken from the lake. Later the boys caught several more. After a swim in the lake the three recrossed to the monument on the Sharon shore. As the campers sat around the fire that evening Harry said, "it seemed a pity that the Moravians, only, should have a monument." He proposed that one should be erected on *Poconnuck* also, for the Indians, a bronze statue of Nequitimaug, that chief who ruled over the tribe whose relics he had found in the cave. Why shouldn't an Indian mountain like *Poconnuck* have a statue just as well as a tobacco store? A bronze Indian silhouetted against the sky and looking off on the land his fathers owned before the white man came, would be so fitting and proper that it was strange no one had ever thought of it.

The next day Uncle Dick proposed that they should all climb *Poconnuck* and eat their lunch up there. They did so. From the ledges and splintered crags he showed the boys the striking points in the landscape. To the north was Mount Riga, named by some charcoal burners from France and the Swiss Cantons. They had transferred the name of their own Rigi, looking off on the Bernese Overland, to this American mountain. Here at the foot of the mountain in one of the old iron furnaces was forged a chain which had been stretched across the Hudson in the Revolution to impede the progress of the British ships. "On Mount Riga," Uncle Dick said, "was also the only piece of virgin forest yet left in Connecticut." To the south of *Poconnuck* lay the green Webutuck valley, the granary of the Revolution, while to the west stretched the long billowing ranges which stopped only at the Hudson.

Uncle Dick was especially eloquent in praise of Sharon Street, whose line of verdure, enfolding the churches and clock-tower, they could plainly make out.

Here a discussion arose as to the com-

parative beauty of some far-famed New England streets. The boys had come from Longmeadow and naturally gave that the prec̈minence. Uncle Dick was too courteous to openly dispute their claim. Several streets he admitted had strong points in their favor. Old Hadley was the cord of a silver bow, that bow being the winding and willow-fringed Connecticut. Old Saybrook was at the mouth of the river with lighthouse and breakwater, had murmurs and scents of the infinite sea as it guarded Lady Fenwick's tomb. Longmeadow had glimpses of Mount Tom and the Holyoke Range, a great width of common with the river below whose spring freshets drove out the early settlers from the alluvial to the bluffs above, but Sharon was of loftier altitude than all the others. There was a rim of distant mountains. No pent-up town contracted your powers or limited the vision. You looked off through airy spaces, miles and leagues of air, like an aviator were tempted to fly and soar. Dawn and sunset in Sharon had their Ruskin colors, the rose-purples of the Switzer's mountains. The village was not set in a plain and had not been commercialized

by the trolley. Clinging to the shoulder of the long Taconic ridges it hung suspended midway between crest and stream. In summer it had the verdure of Ireland and in winter the air and sports of Canada. You should see it in the spring when the lilac hedges are in bloom. "Harry, it would transform you from a sportsman into a poet." "Yes," replied Harry, "that's what the Irishman said about his mother tongue: if you could only speak Irish you would be a poet and sing of Tipperary in the spring."

George doubted, however, if Sharon had the historical importance of these other villages. Hadley had sheltered the regicides, and Saybrook possessed the site of the Old Fort, and the original location of Yale University. Longmeadow was coeval with Springfield and had its thrilling chapter of Indian wars when King Philip was the settler's terror. Here Uncle Dick bravely came to the defense of his favorite village. In a stone chateau was a painting by Benjamin West of "Christ Healing the Sick" he said; an eighteenth century house contained an appeal to Congress by a general of the Revolution for the pay his services

had merited but never received. Some of the older people could locate the very spot on the village green where Whitefield once preached. A modest woman who would not reveal the fact, left among her papers a genealogy of Huguenot ancestors which any peer might envy. The type of the street was that tract of land which, in the middle ages, belonged to a community of freemen, and was known as the mark, or common. Uncle Dick was very fond of recalling what Tacitus had found among our ancestors in the forests of Germany. He said the old New England custom of turning the pigs, geese and cattle loose upon the street was a survival of that ancient, communal ownership. George and Harry became greatly interested in his narrative. Here on Sharon Street was the "Old Stone House" where British officers had been lodged as prisoners of war after Burgoyne's surrender. Down this road Hessian troops had marched singing Luther's hymn, *'Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott'*, as Governor Smith remembered when a boy. This border country was the meeting place of different races. Here came the Dutch, the French Huguenots, the Palatines, the

Puritans and the Moravians. The Indians *were* here. They had vanished but left their language. So long as the streams are musical and the breezes whisper, so long will the American love the tongue of his Fatherland. Down the mountain side to the north of *Poconnuck* there tumbled a stream which Harry and John Gilder had seen on their long hunt together. *Wachocastinook* was its Indian name, which means, falling water. Like the Jordan it is the descender, and rushes down to Salisbury in a succession of waterfalls. At this point an eagle was seen sailing over *Poconnuck*. Harry, who had his Winchester with him, now slipped away, hurrying through the scrub and over the ledges for the best possible shot.

George improved this half hour of his brother's absence to get some further information from his uncle which their recent conversation had called forth. "Uncle Dick, I wish you would tell me more about these Indian names like *Poconnuck* and *Wachocastinook*. They are strangely fascinating."

Indian names, yes.

There are some of them left and very

precious they are. They are "The Last of the Mohicans," literally so, but a symphony of poetry and music.

These Indians of Litchfield County were a branch of the great Algonquin family which occupied all of New England when it was discovered and whose area on the North American continent was more extensive than that of any other ethnic stock. The language was Mohican or Mohegan.

If we desire to know just what dialect was spoken by the Indians of the Housatonic valley we have the "Observations on the Language of the Muhhekaneew Indians" by the younger Edwards. He grew up with them as a boy, loved the language, thought in it, until, as he says, it became more familiar to him than his mother tongue. The language spoken in the Indian villages at Stockbridge, Kent and New Milford was the same as that at *Poconnuck,* and though it is lost now and must forever be a dead language it was the true American accent. It was a language that made men saints or sinners. John Eliot and the two Edwards became saints with it, but Cotton Mather, the pages of whose *Magnalia* are studded with pompous ver-

bosity and pedantic Latin, lost his temper when he came to Mohegan. He says, "But if their language be short I am sure the words composed of it are long enough to tire the patience of any scholar in the world; one would think they had been growing ever since Babel." He cites the case of a young woman possessed by demons, who understood his Latin, Greek and Hebrew, but when the learned divine tried Mohegan on them even the devils couldn't understand him. *Wachocastinook* is a very pretty name as you see but the *Naromiyocknowhusunkatankshunk* brook which enters the Housatonic near Gaylordsville is not so conducive to poetry and requires a course in lingual athletics before you can master it.

One thing is true of all Indian words, however, they describe the locality with great vividness. They are the Thoreaus of human speech.

"Uncle Dick, I also noticed that in speaking of Sharon, a little while ago, you called it the border country. I've heard you say that *Poconnuck* is a mountain on the border." "Yes," said his uncle, "we are in Litchfield County, Connecticut, up

here on the summit of *Poconnuck.* If you care to hear about it I have an article prepared for a local paper which I will read. It is on The Litchfield Border." George signified at once his willingness and stretched himself out on a mat of mountain cranberry while his uncle read, in the pauses of the wind, from his manuscript.

THE LITCHFIELD BORDER.

By the Litchfield Border we mean the western boundary of the country and the state. The borders of Connecticut have always been difficult to locate. By the conquest of the Pequots, Connecticut claimed all the land up to Narragansett Bay, so that Rhode Island became a non-entity. Rufus Choate, referring to the difficulties of the commissioners in fixing the eastern boundary, once said, " the line between the states was bounded on the north by a bramble bush, on the south by a blue jay, on the west by a hive of bees in swarming time and on the east by five hundred foxes with firebrands tied to their tails." So much for Connecticut's eastern border, but the western, or Litchfield one, was even more indefinite. The charter of Charles

II., under which the people lived up to 1818, gave to Connecticut all the land "from Narragansett Bay on the east to the South Sea on the west part with the islands thereunto adjoining." Charles, though a mean king, was not mean with his charter, since it gave Connecticut a strip of land seventy miles wide and extending one-eighth of the distance round the globe. This charter of Charles II., dated in 1662, gave us a claim to lands in Ohio, known as the Connecticut Western Reserve, from the sale of which has come a part of our present school fund. The western or Litchfield border has always been different from the eastern in speech, customs, diet, money, religion and race. The influence and nearness of New York State accounts largely for it. Some familiar examples may be noted: the minister is called *The Dominie;* you are out of the zone of pies, baked beans and clambakes; your landlady will ask you at breakfast if you will have some *supawn,* a Dutch word never heard in transcendental and classic Boston.

A shilling in New York has less units of value than one in Connecticut, while our

town government and little local democracies all stop at the state line. In Litchfield County we call the official who tests and validates a will a Judge of Probate, but over the border he is a Surrogate. David Harum could trade horses or surrogate an enemy with equal ease, you will remember.

The Litchfield Border is marked by a peculiar geological formation, being underbedded with limestone. You have left the granite areas with their stone walls and boulders brought down by the ice-cap to come into a region covered with the greenest turf, a dairy country which the meadows of Holland and the pastures of Switzerland cannot surpass. The wind-swept hilltops have been softened, there is an amiability and lovability in the landscape; the early settlers named one border town, Amenia, the friendly.

The general absence of water power has made this region to be much frequented by those who drive for pleasure. You are quite reconciled to that loss of industrialism and severe commercial stamp which gives such importance to the valley of the Naugatuck. Here on the border you are isolated from the many-windowed factories

and smoking chimneys. The roads, firm and hard, go under the shaggy shoulders of the mountain; along foaming brooks bordered with dark hemlock and pink laurel, past farms of intervale, fair as the pastorals of Virgil. The "hollow," a characteristic word in the border country, brings you out to villages perfectly finished, dropped down with their lawns and terraces into a pocket of the everlasting hills. Anon you climb up to the granite zone above the limestone to see the ragged line of the Catskills burnished by the sunset and the flash of the evening lamps in the hotels. This is all to the west; the eastern passes let you down to the Housatonic with its loops and reaches, the river road following the course of the stream, its feet literally in the rapid water. North through the gates of Berkshire, east to Litchfield, the county seat, west over the line into Dutchess or south to Dover there is as fine a driving country as can be asked for and you will rarely cross a railroad track. It is the border, the borderland of Connecticut, these Taconic highlands being the rampart where three great states come together and set up their banners.

This border country is haunted by memories of the Revolution. During that struggle one of the great military lines of the patriot army stretched across it. After the battle of Monmouth, in 1778, the east wing of Washington's army was distributed in winter cantonments from West Point to Danbury. Washington and Lafayette were both at Quaker Hill and the old Friends' Meeting House was a hospital for sick and wounded soldiers. In the journal of the Marquis De Chastellux, that rare book entitled, "Travels in North America in the years 1780, 1781 and 1782," the Marquis says he crossed the Housatonic at "Bull's Iron Works" (now Bull's Bridge), and adds, "We soon met with another, called Ten Mile River, which falls into this, and which we followed for two or three miles, and then came in sight of several handsome houses forming a part of the district called "The Oblong." He was going to "Morehouse Tavern," that famous hostelry of the Revolutionary period. It was difficult to get lodgings, as rooms and beds had all been taken by some New Hampshire farmers who were driving oxen through to the patriot army at Fishkill,

but when they knew that a French general with his *aides-de-camp* had arrived, the gallant Marquis had the pick of the rooms. Two years later De Chastellux passed through here again on his way from Newport to the headquarters of Washington at Newburgh. Rochambeau, under whom De Chastellux had served, was about to sail for France wth his French allies, for the war was over. The Marquis took the usual route from Hartford by way of Litchfield, down the Housatonic to Bull's Bridge and then along the Ten Mile River out to the tavern.

There are yet a few links to bind the present generation to that remote and stirring past. On the Sharon road to Cornwall Bridge is the site of an old mill where grain was ground to feed Washington's army; the writer has talked with living men who have the most vivid recollection of Adoniram Maxim, a Revolutionary soldier who, with Ethan Allen, tried to capture Montreal, but was taken captive, sent across the Atlantic and exhibited in England in an iron cage. The old man suffered much in a prison ship and being exhibited as a specimen of the American

rebels (he was very homely) could never hear an Englishman preach, although he was a devout Methodist. It is a long story to tell how the Hessian troopers from Burgoyne's surrendered army, about 1,500 of them, marched through these border towns on their way to Virginia. The trunk and stump of an old elm against which they piled their saddles yet remains on Sharon Street.

This borderland was the meeting place for different racial and ethnic stocks. We New Englanders have been so accustomed to hearing the praises of the Puritans sung that we forget those other worthy colonists who settled in The Oblong, the Dutch, the French Huguenots and the Palatines. Recently, in driving through Amenia Union, a little hamlet situated so exactly on the border that both Connecticut and New York claim it, the writer noticed a house so distinctly foreign in its architecture that it might have been transported from some *dorp* around old Heidelberg and set down here in the valley of the Webutuck.

The Litchfield Border gives one a very interesting study in land grants and feudalism. Over the line were those extensive

manors stretching back 35 miles from the Hudson. A great manor with seignorial rights and privileges like that of the Livingstons at Clermont was the very antipodes of New England ideals, yet here on the border the town and the manor met. The Puritan had a system of government made to order. He surveyed a township and then set up in it his civic theocracy, a little narrow, to be sure, but perfect and complete. Over the border things grew in a looser way. Life had a freer swing and copied aristocratic models.

Ever since Walter Scott sang of border chivalry there has been a touch of the romantic in border lands. Cooper puts some of it into old Fishkill in his story of "The Spy, a Tale of the Neutral Ground." We find it here on the Litchfield Border. One step and you are in Dutchess county — a little limestone prism by the roadside separates untitled New England from the estates of royalty. We are glad the Revolution didn't sweep away every vestige of the royal names. When the principal street in the average American town is Main, Washington or Franklin, we are glad that Williamsburgh, in Virginia,

keeps yet its Duke of Gloster street and for the endless Jefferson counties in the United States, named after the great apostle of democracy, we are glad that one was named after the Duchess of York. We are not so rich in historic names or sentiments of the olden time that we can afford to lose any of them. It was such a delight to find that Count Zinzendorf's daughter came to a little lake on the Connecticut border that we have called her the Countess of *Gnadensee.*

By this time Harry had returned. His shot at the eagle was unsuccessful, but he had obtained an excellent view of The Dome and Greylock up in Massachusetts. The mountain air was exhilarating now. Throwing up his cap, the one rescued from the porcupine, he shouted, " Hurrah for old New England and her cloud-capped granite hills."

From the summit of *Poconnuck* the boys observed that the mountain had two eyes, a lake on either side. There are so many lakes in this borderland that it has been called the Lake Country of Connecticut. Uncle Dick told the boys that English

coachmen often said these lakes reminded them of their own Westmoreland. One thing Uncle Dick's glowing descriptions made the boys decide to do, that was to visit Sharon Street.

On their way down *Poconnuck* to the camp, Harry noticed a large animal on the dead limb of an old chestnut, asleep. It was of a tawny color with a face like a tiger's. The boy's nerves tingled with excitement as he crept up and almost under its body fired. With a wild prolonged screech, like what they had heard that first night in camp, the animal tumbled to the ground, rolled over and over, clawing up a cloud of dust. The boy rushed in and then fired another bullet into the brute. After some fierce snarls and convulsive struggles the animal lay dead. "Harry, it was lucky you didn't corner that fellow in the cave," said George. "Look at his teeth and claws. That's the fellow who was after our meat that first night in the woods." It was the proudest moment in Harry's life when Uncle Dick, to whom he showed his quarry, came up. "I'll take him to a taxidermist. He's as big as a Canada lynx," said his uncle. The animal looked lean and

hungry. He had evidently traveled a long way and was tired out when discovered asleep on the tree. That night around the campfire the talk was all about wild animals, from the savage brute the boys had shot and slung upon a pole, to lions, larger cats, an ex-President was shooting in the jungles of Africa.

John Gilder, having heard the reports of Harry's rifle, came over in the evening. One thing he did not approve of, the big cracking fire the boys had built. "A bonfire 'haint no campfire, never. They burn the mountain over and is pesky dangerous." Here John quoted what one of the old Indians around *Poconnuck* once told him.

"White man heap fool; make um big fire — can't git near; Injun make um little fire — git close. Uh, good!"

If the fire did not please John the wildcat excited him. The old hunter had many stories to tell as he saw that tawny brute Harry's rifle had brought down from the old chestnut. One was how, Putnam like, he had shot one in a cave and dragged him out wounded and snarling.

The hunter had also brought over some

wild honey from a bee-tree he had felled. He showed how with a box of comb on a swaying tripod of a sapling you could attract the bees and then line them home.

It was now late into the night. Even John Gilder's stories and the fascination of his uncouth dialect began to fail on the weary campers. The campfire was burning low save where some pine knots flashed and sputtered. 'Tis hard to trace all the correlations and connections of our thought at such a time. Uncle Dick's mind wandered away from the honey of *Poconnuck* to the honey of *Hymettus,* from a campfire on an Indian mountain in Connecticut, to those classic ones, lighting up old legends and traditions. *Poconnuck* and *Pine Cobble* touched *Pelion* and *Ossa.* In those flashes, piercing the gloom of the dim old forest, stood revealed the camps and hoary landscapes of the past; the bivouacs of Napoleon, English yeomen and French knights at Cressy, William's conquering and victorious Normans, the camps of Crusaders and Saracens, Roman legions stationed at the boundaries of the empire, the phalanx of Alexander marching to a world's

conquest, back, back into the past until history shades into legend and you stand upon the plains of Troy.

"George," he said, "what Greek did you read last year in the university curriculum?" "The eighth book of the Iliad," replied his nephew. Here Uncle Dick pitched a last log into the blaze and then quoted the Homeric hexameters:

> "So many a fire between the ships and stream
> Of Xanthus blazed before the towers of Troy,
> A thousand on the plain; and close by each
> Sat fifty in the blaze of burning fire;
> And champing golden grain, the horses stood
> Hard by their chariots, waiting for the dawn."

"Boys, the camp of Achilles and the camp of *Poconnuck* must now get some sleep."

The next day the boys broke camp and said good-by to *Poconnuck,* though not until they had exacted a promise that their uncle would come to *Poconnuck* the following year bringing bacon and blankets. After a few days at Troutbeck, they started for home on their bicycles. Pedaling through Sharon Street, they halted at the clock-tower to get the Washington time and also to read the verses graven upon its

back. There were some other verses Uncle Dick had given as a souvenir of their visit, which George read aloud:

Lone tower upon the border,
Thou art the utmost bound
To mark New England's ancient strength
And send her challenge down;
Thou standest where Taconic hills
Melt in a dreamy haze.
Southward the perfect valley runs,
The valley of our praise.
The fisher in his little boat
Out on the Lake of Grace
Doth listen when thy mellow tones
Steal round *Poconnuck's* base;
And teamsters with their heavy load
Pause in the dust and heat,
The rumbling wheels are stilled to hear
The Angelus of the Street.

A second halt was made at Salisbury to hear the chimes in the Norman tower and to see a piece of Salisbury Cathedral which had been donated to the new library. Here *Wachocastinook* came rushing down from his mountain lakes. Every year in laurel time Uncle Dick went up there for the view. No town in Connecticut, he said, had such a wealth of natural scenery as Salisbury. No wrinkled sea crawled be-

neath you but around was a wilderness of lakes and mountains. He had given George some verses originally left in a copper cylinder in a cairn of stones up on Bald Peak.

My steps led down a mountain brook,
I listened to its roar at times,
The falling stream, *Wachocastinook;*
Another voice, the Salisbury chimes
Came up the road.
'Twas England spake unto me then,
Old Sarum lent her minster choir
And through the laurel bordered glen
The stream's full voice was praise and prayer.
The falling stream went singing on,
It wound below St. Austin's height;
I caught its music in a psalm
Sung to an old Gregorian chant,
And then it changed to sing again
That earlier freedom which it knew
The beauty of the Riga tarns,
Those lonely heights where eagles mew.
Stream of the mountain and the sky
Thou hast two moods for which I faint—
An Indian freedom of the wild,
The chaste obedience of the saint.

Taking the under-mountain road up into Berkshire, the boys pedaled to Stockbridge, where they dined at the Red Lion. A stone monument on the street there, called attention to some early labors to Christianize the Indians. These were the same tribe the boys had found traces of at *Poconnuck,*

but in one case saintly Moravians, and in the other Jonathan Edwards, had been the preacher.

"Harry," said his brother, as they sipped their after-dinner coffee at the Red Lion, "what do you think was the best thing at our camp on *Poconnuck?*" "Finding those relics and shooting that wildcat," Harry replied instantly. "Don't you agree with me?" A far away, dreamy look came into George's eyes as he slowly answered, "No, not at all, the best thing wasn't the mountain, but the lake. Its name haunts me continually. Harry, I have fallen in love." "You have! who is the lady, pray tell?" "Zinzendorf's daughter, Benigna, the Countess of *Gnadensee.* She is the Lady of the Lake."

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